



Toni N. Harp
Mayor

City of New Haven
Office of the Economic Development Administrator
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New Haven, Connecticut 06510



Matthew Nemerson
Economic Development
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Planning and Development Committee
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Representative Miller, Senator Osten, and members of the Planning & Development Committee, I'm Stephen Fontana, Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of New Haven, and on behalf of Mayor Toni N. Harp, I wish to testify regarding **HB 6851**, AA Establishing The Connecticut Transit Corridor Development Authority. This bill would establish a new statewide development authority to create transit-oriented projects within a one-half mile radius of any transit station.

First, we welcome the Governor's proposal, since it implicitly recognizes not only the need to reinvest in our transportation infrastructure (including public transit) generally, but also New Haven's specific need to renovate Union Station and construct a new, additional parking garage adjacent to it. Clearly, he and we share many of the same goals for redeveloping Union Station and its immediate environs.

To the extent that our redevelopment vision includes other design elements, however, we believe that state interests should not supersede local zoning and home rule by giving a new state body eminent domain powers which may abrogate post-*Kelo* protections. We believe, therefore, that our transit-oriented development proposal, contained in **HB 5662** (currently before the Commerce Committee), is a more effective way to promote transit-oriented development in New Haven, by creating a shared state/local authority to implement transit-oriented development around Union Station in New Haven.

New Haven, like every other community in Connecticut, has a clear, well-defined, and longstanding ability to decide for itself what kinds of development it does and does not want. This value applies not only to shared regional assets like our train stations, but also to our residential neighborhoods and business districts. The area a half-mile in every direction from Union Station, and our subsidiary State Street Station, delineates a substantial and defining portion of our city: it includes not only the train stations themselves, but also low- to moderate-income neighborhoods, research, educational, and health care facilities, and a significant portion of our downtown commercial district.

The better approach, in our opinion, is to embrace the proposal we have submitted in **HB 5662**. That bill reaffirms New Haven's prerogative to shape its development within its boundaries based on the expressed interests, needs, and wishes of its residents and businesses. We believe that, through our Park New Haven municipal authority, we've served for decades as responsive, efficient, and innovative stewards and builders of Union Station and its current garage. As a result, we are committed and prepared to develop the new garage and renovate the station, consistent with whatever design standards the state may wish to promulgate, especially given the plethora of other, competing priorities that the state will have over the next decade to implement the Governor's transportation agenda at other transit locations.

Last year, we developed language to create an authority pursuant to **HB 5662**. If the Committee wishes, I would be happy to supply it with this language for its review and use. Thank you for your consideration.



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